

March 27, 2008

New Campaign to Ensure the Safe Disposal of Prescription Medications

In light of recent media reports about prescription drugs in drinking water, the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) has partnered with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the American Pharmacists Association (APhA) to help educate the public about the proper way to dispose of medication.

The campaign -- dubbed "SMARxT DISPOSAL" -- will inform people on how to safely dispose of medicines in the trash, and highlight the environmental threat posed from flushing medicines down the toilet. Pharmacies will offer information about this to customers; and state and federal agencies, pharmaceutical manufacturers and conservation groups will join the outreach effort.

APhA, PhRMA and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recommend the following steps can make a huge difference:

- **DO NOT FLUSH** unused medications or **POUR** them down a sink or drain. Consumers were once advised to flush their expired or unused medications; however, recent environmental impact studies report that this could be having an adverse impact on the environment. While the rule of thumb is not to flush, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has determined that certain medications should be flushed due to their abuse potential. Read the instructions on your medication and talk to your pharmacist.
- **Dispose of Unused Medication in Household Trash.** When discarding unused medications, ensure you protect children and pets from potentially negative effects: Pour medication in a sealable plastic bag. If medication is a solid (pill, liquid capsule, etc.), crush it or add water to dissolve it. Add kitty litter, sawdust, coffee grounds (or any material that mixes with the medication and makes it less appealing for pets or children to eat) to the plastic bag. Seal the plastic bag and put it in the trash. Remove and destroy ALL identifying personal information (prescription label) from the medication container.
- **Check for Approved State and Local Collection Programs.** In certain states, you may be able to take your unused medications to your community pharmacy. Consult Your Pharmacist with any questions.

Visit the SMARxT Disposal website at: www.smarxtdisposal.net/.